

Interview with Parker D. Wyman

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

PARKER D. WYMAN

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Q: Mr. Wyman, we're going to be concentrating this interview on your time in Ethiopia. What was the period you were in Ethiopia?

WYMAN: That was from 1972 to 1975.

Q: Which were rather crucial years in the history of Ethiopia. Before that, I wonder if you could give just a short summary of your background: how you came into the Foreign Service, and the type of posts that you'd had until you were assigned to Ethiopia?

WYMAN: Well, I came into the Foreign Service in 1946, directly from military service during the war. I had two days in-between. I took my discharge in Berlin, and went into the Foreign Service right there.

Q: What type of military service did you have?

WYMAN: Well, I was in the field artillery, and got into the fighting at the very end, in the Battle of the Ruhr. I'd started out in the Air Force, but wound up in the artillery.

I had always wanted to come into the Foreign Service, ever since I was in high school, and had it in mind all the way through. And when I was still in the Army in the summer of '45,

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and saw the announcement about the Foreign Service examinations, I hurried to take the opportunity right then to put in my application.

Q: And what type of assignments had you had, prior to going to Ethiopia?

WYMAN: Well, it was a mixture, really, of mostly political assignments, and economic assignments—quite a few. All together I'd spent ten years in Germany: twice in Berlin, once in D#sseldorf. I'd had some experience in Berlin, on the second tour, towards the end of it, in a position that was called Political Advisor but actually was the counterpart of a DCM position.

Then I'd been to the University of North Dakota, as a Diplomat in Residence for a year. I was over, briefly, in the Pentagon as a State Department advisor in the Office of Policy and Planning, for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Then I went out to Vietnam and was Province Senior Advisor there in Tay Ninh, from 1970 to 1972. And that was my last assignment prior to going over to Ethiopia.

Q: So, in your background, you really had quite a bit of experience with the American military.

WYMAN: Yes, that's right.

Q: Sometimes our most difficult diplomatic assignment is the difference between the State Department and the Department of Defense. (Laughs) Well, how did you get your assignment to Ethiopia? Do you know? Was it a routine one, or had you sought it?

WYMAN: Well, no, I hadn't particularly sought it. When I came back from Vietnam, I had indicated I was very much interested in a DCM position.

Q: We might—just for the record—say DCM means Deputy Chief of Mission, which is the number two person in the embassy; it's deputy to the ambassador.

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WYMAN: I had simply indicated that was the kind of position I was most interested in, and I did not particularly seek out Ethiopia. But that came to me—the proposal that I go there—and I was very pleased with it. I thought it would be an extremely interesting job, and it proved to be even more so than I had thought. (Laughs) Of course, I do remember thinking that with Vietnam having been my last post, I was going to a place that would be very quiet and peaceful, in comparison to what I had just come from. And I turned out to be wrong about that, of course. (Laughs) It was anything but!

Q: Well, tell me, who was the ambassador at the time you were assigned there?

WYMAN: Ross Adair was the ambassador when I came. He was a former congressman from Indiana, and had been congressman for—oh, quite a long time. And then he was defeated in an election, and very shortly after that was appointed the ambassador to Ethiopia.

Q: And he was there for part of the time you were?

WYMAN: Yes, he had already been there for—oh, I think about a year and a half before I arrived. And then I had, basically, a year and a half while he was still there. Then, for health reasons, he resigned and left. And it was, I believe, four days after he left that the very first event of the Ethiopian Revolution took place; one that we were not immediately aware of.

Q: Well, now just to give a full picture of this, how did Ambassador Adair use you as his deputy? There's always a difference in the way ambassadors use their deputies.

WYMAN: Well, he relied on me very much, and on the whole staff. He was very conscious of the fact that his experience was, in most respects, very different from that of a Foreign Service Officer. And he felt it was entirely appropriate, and wanted, to rely heavily on all of this staff. And I must say, from that standpoint, I was delighted with the whole arrangement. He sought our advice. He took it very seriously, and expected us to make

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recommendations to him, and paid great attention to our recommendations. I would like to see all non-career ambassadors follow the kind of pattern that he did.

Q: Well tell me, where do you see his strengths? I mean, if he was relying on you, what was his input into the operations?

WYMAN: Well, he was—of course, as a former congressman, tremendously skilled in dealing with people. He had a great deal of contact, and many cordial relationships with the people in power in Ethiopia at that time, and with the diplomatic community; and certainly, I think, did a good bit to promote respect for the United States, in that way. I think he felt that his principal contribution could be more along those lines, than it would be, say, in initiating new policies, and changes in policy.

Q: Before we get to the events in Ethiopia, just a little background. How did you find the staff? I mean, you had not come with any experience in Africa. You were a skilled political officer. You had come from a turbulent place, where you had to use all your skills in Vietnam. But still, you didn't know the Horn of Africa. How did you find the embassy staff?

WYMAN: I felt they were very competent. There were very few, really, that had had experience in Africa. I remember one or two. I hadn't had experience in Africa, although I had served in Cairo many years previously; and that had given me at least some greater awareness of that part of the world than I would have had otherwise.

But I did find that our people—when they arrived—invariably became quite interested in the history of Ethiopia, and dug into it, and learned something about the background. Part of the reason for that, I think, was that, when you get into it, Ethiopian history is quite fascinating.

There are a lot of countries in Africa where there isn't a great deal on the record, farther back, as to what was going on. Well, that isn't the case in Ethiopia; there's a lot known about Ethiopian history, going right back to B.C. And it's been a very turbulent and

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dramatic history. The country is dramatic itself, physically. We usually found that our people would get very much interested in Ethiopia, and wanted to know more about it, as soon as they arrived. And that helped.

Our Political Counselor was a person who had arrived at the same time I did—Peter Sebastian. And he, particularly, did this kind of thing, and acquired an excellent background—I felt—in Ethiopian history, and particularly the current history, very rapidly. He was a tremendous source of strength all the way through the whole period.

Q: When in the year did you arrive?

WYMAN: In the summer of '72.

Q: What were American interests in Ethiopia at that time?

WYMAN: Well, our primary interest, actually, was Kagnev Station, located in Asmara. That was a communications station for the Navy. It was a very special, high-powered communications station which had a very important role in our overall communications network around the world. There wasn't anything quite like it anywhere near there. It was regarded as being of great importance, from the military standpoint.

So we, of course, operated that station with the consent of the Ethiopian government. And we had had it for many years before, and were very anxious to keep it. We, on our part, were important—well, I'm going beyond your question—but we were very important to the Ethiopians, from the standpoint of both economic assistance, and military assistance. And those, too, were programs that went back a long way. We had provided them—as we had, of course, many other countries—with a lot of economic assistance.

But also—and this was different, certainly, from the situation elsewhere in Africa—we had been giving them a lot of military training, and had many military advisors on the spot—I mean, in country—to help with the training. And also, we had provided military equipment.

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Most of it was on terms of grant assistance, where the Ethiopians did not have to repay for the acquisition of this equipment. And so, in both terms of training and equipment, the Ethiopian military was very heavily dependent upon the United States.

Q: Expanding this a bit, from your point of view—we had this army dependent on us, but a fairly well equipped military force, and yet most of it at that point was poised against Somalia. Somalia was another country with whom we wanted to maintain good relations, and the balance between these two was always a major problem. How did you feel about the Somalia part of the equation?

WYMAN: Well, the key factor there was that although we desired good relations with Somalia, the Soviet Union had come in some years before I arrived, and really become the primary patron, the primary backer, the primary helper of Somalia; in a fashion which, in some respects, resembled our position in relation to Ethiopia. However, they had provided practically nothing in terms of economic assistance, but their emphasis on military assistance was very heavy. And they had actually—on an annual basis—provided much more military assistance for Somalia than we had for Ethiopia—much more.

The result was that Somalia was yearly becoming a greater threat to Ethiopia, because Somalia had always claimed—ever since it became independent—that it was entitled to a very large slice of Ethiopia, known as the Ogaden. They made it clear that they expected one day to get it back, by one means or another. Since the Ethiopian government showed no disposition to give them an inch of it, there was a distinct military threat there that everybody was aware of. And the threat was growing, as I say, every year. So that was the picture between Ethiopia and Somalia. That played a very important role in all those events that were to follow, during the Revolution.

Q: I wonder if you could now describe the situation in Ethiopia when you arrived? Remember, we're trying to have you say how you saw it, and how we were looking at the situation at that time.

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WYMAN: The Ethiopian situation as it looked when I arrived. Yes, and I'll make that distinction, and emphasize that I'll speak of it now, as it looked when I arrived, because of course, looking back later with hindsight, you would tend to emphasize things a little bit differently.

As I arrived, the Emperor, of course, had been really the government.

Q: This is Haile Selassie.

WYMAN: Haile Selassie had been the government since he took power in 1930—some 42 years before the time that I arrived there. He had introduced quite a few liberal reforms when he was a young man, particularly in the 1930s. Things such as abolishing slavery, introducing a constitution, a cabinet, a parliament. And rather amazingly, these were things—as far as I can tell from reading the history—practically nobody in Ethiopia had suggested. He came out with them himself; he absolutely led the way as a reformer in those early years.

As time went by, though, he definitely became more conservative. Despite the existence of a parliament and a cabinet, it was largely a system of one-man rule. He made all the basic decisions. And he became more conservative. He put a lot of emphasis on education; that was one of the things, certainly, that he deserves the most credit for. In that respect, he did something that I think is absolutely unprecedented: while Emperor, he took the title of Minister of Education. I don't know of any emperor that ever did anything like that. And he did it strictly to emphasize how important he thought education was for his people.

But, as I say, as he got older he tended to become more and more conservative, and you began to get—particularly from the people that had been thoroughly educated—more and more of a desire to break out of an old fashioned system of government, into something a bit more modern. And finally, in 1960, there was a coup that took place, while the Emperor was out of the country. That was a very clear signal that dissatisfaction was building up.

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But the Emperor came back very hastily, by airplane, and soon after his arrival, he got control of the coup. The situation quieted down entirely and it remained quiet in the years following. So in that period, from 1960 to '72, when I arrived, things had gone on quietly and smoothly, for the most part. And it was certainly the conventional wisdom when I arrived that the situation would remain basically unchanged until the Emperor died.

To say it was the conventional wisdom is to understate the case. It was a unanimous opinion. The reason we would ask about that kind of thing so much was that so many of us were new, and we could see that the system was quite different from what you had operating elsewhere, even in Africa. So we would ask about the stability of it, and the prospects for the future. And we always got the same answer. I can't remember anybody who was a maverick on this point. All bets were off when the Emperor died. But as long as he was alive, obviously things were going to go along pretty much as they had.

Q: I think this is an interesting point. Sometimes when you have people coming in from the outside—as often happens in the Foreign Service—they have not absorbed the local cultures. So sometimes they can look at things with a clearer and colder eye. But if you get the conventional answer, you get trapped into that mind set.

WYMAN: Yes, that's right. And if you looked for real symptoms of trouble—while, of course, it was obvious you had an antiquated type of government—you had an economic situation that was very poor. There were very, very few countries—maybe a handful in the whole world—that appeared to have an average standard of living lower than in Ethiopia. In that sense, everybody knew there was potential for trouble there. But the only symptom of anything breaking out had been way back in 1960, and, as I say, that had really disappeared almost immediately once the Emperor reappeared, and things had been quiet since then.

So people were speculating quite a bit as to what might happen after the Emperor died. There was no agreement on that. There were all kinds of different possibilities. But it

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looked as though you would have stability until the Emperor died. That was really the major thing that one could say about the way Ethiopia looked, at the time I arrived. That, and the fact that, in economic terms, it was a disaster.

Q: Well, now just one further question on the situation then. We had an AID program at that point.

WYMAN: Yes.

Q: How well was that done, with the problems of distribution, corruption, and all that? And how did we cope with that?

WYMAN: Well, I think that we did quite well with our AID program. I do not believe that we had too much problem with corruption there. I don't think we were losing a lot of the value of the aid for that reason. It was a pretty modest program of economic assistance; modest in terms of what needed to be done and modest if you compare it with our AID programs elsewhere. If you compare it with the amount of Ethiopian government spending on improving the economy, it was not modest; it was very impressive in those terms. But still, in dollars and cents it was not a large amount. And given the vast amount of development that Ethiopia needed, one definitely should not have, and could not have, expected any miracles from it.

I do remember one other factor that we had to struggle with there, and that was that we felt, really, that the building of roads was particularly important in Ethiopia. They had incredible figures: something like—the vast majority of the people lived more than a full day's walk from the nearest road. So we felt that building roads was very important to any kind of development. Well, at that particular time, at least, our Congress was very much prejudiced against spending AID money on roads, and we had to battle with that all the time.

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Q: With this in mind, how would you characterize Ethiopian society, as you saw it? Speaking particularly about the bureaucracy, the military, the merchant class, and other groups—as we saw it. Were there tensions between these classes?

WYMAN: No, I wouldn't say you had unusual tensions there. The society was normally characterized as feudal, and I think that is a pretty good term for it. There were members of the royal family, and governors of different parts of the country, who exercised a lot of authority in their own geographic areas. They were subject to, and definitely took orders from the Emperor, but nevertheless, they had a great deal of authority in their particular parts of the country. And that, of course, was very feudal in nature.

There was a definite assigned sphere for the military, and the types of things they could do; and for the bureaucracy. The different components of society were operating within clear limits, I would say, established by the Emperor. So to use the term feudal society was probably the correct one.

I don't think there was so much tension between the different classes of the society. However, there always—in Ethiopia—had been a fair amount of geographic tension, between different parts of the country.

Q: It was really an empire in the true sense, wasn't it? You had Tigre, you had Eritrea.

WYMAN: That's right.

Q: You had different tribal groups, too, who were . . .

WYMAN: That's right, and some areas had become part of Ethiopia much more recently than others. In the mid-nineteenth century, for example, great chunks in the south had been added. And the feeling of national unity was weak, despite the fact that Ethiopia went back centuries and centuries and centuries. So there always had been a lot of tension there. And of course those regional differences were also rooted in differences

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in languages. So there was a good bit of tension of that kind, but that had always been true in Ethiopian history, and was not anything new. It wasn't perceived that there was any particular danger of that pulling the society apart.

Now, Eritrea was a special case, and there's too much of a history there, really, for me to get into. But beginning in 1962, there had really been an organized resistance in Eritrea, and they were trying to acquire independence from Ethiopia. That resistance had, more or less, grown year after year. By the time that I got there in 1972, it was a well-developed, internal resistance movement. And fighting would occasionally take place in different parts of Eritrea. But this was on a very, very small scale compared to what came later. And certainly one made a visit—as we Americans did—to Asmara and Massawa without any feeling that you were really getting into a dangerous area, or anything like that. Other parts of Eritrea—more remote parts—were somewhat dangerous, but not there in the big cities.

Q: Well, now I think having sort of set the background of how we saw it, can you talk about how events unrolled?

WYMAN: Well, one suddenly began to hear, early in 1974—and I believe it was the latter part of January—one began to hear of a strike by the taxicab drivers in Addis, and a bit later a strike by certain teachers, and a bit later of a local military mutiny against the commanders in one particular spot. And all of these things involved demands being made by the lower-ranking people in the situation, for certain concessions. These were not demands about changing the form of government, or deposing the Emperor, or anything like that; they were very localized demands.

Now, it's difficult for me to remember the exact sequence at this time—and I wouldn't really want to spell it out, anyway—of which event preceded which. Eventually, we found out what the first event was. We didn't know at the time, but later on we did find out the event that I think unquestionably was the start of the Ethiopian Revolution. And of course it was of particular interest to find that out, because after all, when you have something as

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momentous as a revolution that turns a country upside down—its whole power structure—it's particularly intriguing to know what really set it off—what was the start.

Well, what happened was that in some distant military outpost, in the Ogaden—the semi-desert area, in the southwest of Ethiopia, where there were a good many military outposts because of the fear of a Somali invasion—there was a severe shortage of water. The well was not producing as much water as normal—the well that everybody relied on for water. The officers insisted on taking a large proportion of the available water for themselves, and apparently leaving little water for the enlisted men, and certainly considerably less water than they thought they should have.

Well, they finally mutinied in that situation and they captured the commander of this local outpost, which was quite small, and I think a couple of other officers. They really just held all the officers—just tied them up—and insisted that this situation had to change; they had to get enough water, and I think they demanded one or two other reforms, too. But the basic one was water. The officers agreed and were untied. Nobody was hurt in the incident at all. One might well have thought that that would certainly be the end of it, and I think it would have been except for one rather odd little feature of it.

And that was that the enlisted men apparently decided that there might be some retaliation against them eventually for having done this, even though they'd won the demands; and that they might be safer off if they would let other enlisted men in the army know what had happened, and give them the straight version of the story—that this might protect them from retaliation. And so, over the military network that connects all the military units in Ethiopia they put out the word of what they had done.

Well, this was absolutely like the proverbial situation where you have a tiny snowball at the top of the mountain that starts down and picks up snow as it goes. Because it was only a very few days after that that there was some somewhat larger scale mutiny—but still at a low level—at another spot in Ethiopia.

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Then the word of this got out beyond the military. The taxicab drivers had been dissatisfied anyway. They noticed that the enlisted men who had pulled off this mutiny had not been punished, and had achieved their demands. This gave them a little incentive. They went on strike, and as I mentioned, the teachers did later on. This was not all simultaneous; there were gaps in here of three, four, five days—a week to ten days. But an amazing series of events like this began to develop.

And after they had gone on for, I'd say, approximately a month, they were growing, obviously, in importance. And the labor unions got into the picture later on, with a strike of their own. As these things became more serious, of course, there was more and more publicity, and more and more people heard about them, and decided this was their opportunity to improve their lot. And so the Prime Minister resigned after about a month of this.

Well, then the Emperor chose a new Prime Minister. But about this time the movement had gone far enough so that the different military units selected one representative from each one, to go to Addis Ababa and get together to present their grievances to the new Prime Minister. And that group that met in Addis was called the Derg, which is a committee . . .

Q: How do you spell Derg?

WYMAN: Derg. And that became, eventually, the controlling factor in the whole revolution. But it started out as just being these representatives that were sent by their units to present grievances.

Q: Were these enlisted men, mostly?

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WYMAN: Usually they were non-commissioned officers or low-ranking officers. I think the highest rank you would have found in there was major, but even that was unusual. A lot of them were non-commissioned officers.

Q: Were our military advisors reporting on the situation?

WYMAN: Oh yes, they started reporting on it in the very early stages. As I say, that first event we were not aware of at the time, but we started reporting regularly on each one of these things as it came along. At quite an early stage—I can't remember just when, though—we began referring to it—I'm not sure whether we did it so much in the telegrams, but certainly around town—the phrase that was often used for this situation was “the creeping coup.”

Because, you see, there had been a lot of military coups in Africa, and everybody was very conscious of that. The typical coup, though, was something that would happen absolutely overnight; the situation changed from one day to the next, with a totally new group in control. But here—as I've tried to describe it a bit, with this snowball simile—things were happening one additional event after another, a few days apart, and this coup was developing more slowly. In the first stages one thought of that word “coup”, because it was so commonplace in Africa, and not at all—at the beginning—of the word “revolution”, because that would mean something quite different. And there hadn't been revolutions in Africa recently, and so we were thinking of it in terms of a creeping coup.

But it was quite apparent, quite early in the situation—well, certainly with the fall of the Prime Minister—that it was a very serious proposition, and nobody was quite sure where it was going to go.

Q: By the way, as this goes on—this is an unclassified interview—but was the CIA helpful, or were they probably keeping no more abreast of it than you were getting from the regular sources?

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WYMAN: Well, I'm pausing not really to be cautious. There's no particular need for that, because I think I'll speak only in general terms. But I was really trying to recall. There obviously was some information available from the CIA that was not available elsewhere. If I remember correctly, I don't believe it added much to our understanding.

Q: Well, it's not the sort of thing—this would be a very hard thing for it to get a handle on anyway; things sort of disorganized—lower-echelon ranks, anyway.

WYMAN: You're absolutely right, and that gets back to a point that I'd want to make anyway. There was certainly no controlling group at the outset. There was no Lenin here who was organizing things, and making decisions as to today we'll do this, and tomorrow we'll do that, and so forth—and bringing all this about deliberately. It was certainly totally haphazard, uncoordinated, at the beginning. Now, eventually, when the Derg came into existence—well, from then on there began to be some centralized planning, and that did make a difference. But not prior to that. And as you say, under those circumstances it's hard to imagine what the CIA could have found out that really would have been of great help.

Q: Well, then how did this progress?

WYMAN: Let me back up, by the way, because I've left one factor out that I want to put in here, and it's one that should be mentioned. One of the factors that preceded the revolution, the year before, had been the terrible drought in Ethiopia. I didn't mention it because the questions that you happened to put didn't point, really, in that direction. But it was an important factor.

In 1973 there had been a terrible drought in Tigre, and other central parts of Ethiopia—north of Addis Ababa. Tremendous suffering resulted from that and many people died as a result of it. It was a very flagrant example of the inability of the Ethiopian government to cope with a really difficult situation.

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It's very clear that the government at that time was extremely anxious not to give the impression that there was a drought crisis here, with which it could not cope adequately. It did not want to have any publicity about that drought, and the famine that was resulting from it. And this was a very important reason why the efforts of outside countries to come in and assist Ethiopia, in coping with the drought, came much later and slower than they would have otherwise. If the Ethiopian government had come with urgent requests, at an early date—anything like an early date—to foreign governments, the results would have been considerably better than they were.

I can remember, very well, that when we would—at the early stages of the drought—when we would go to the government officials and ask them about this, and ask them about their needs—well, it would be oversimplifying the case somewhat—but generally their attitude was, “Well, this is not really as serious as you might think. The accounts of it that you heard have been exaggerated. We really don't think it's cause for that much concern. Yes, modest assistance from you people would be welcomed, but let's not make the mistake of making a great story of this. It's just not that serious.” That was their general attitude.

And it had an effect on what we did. I've always felt very badly that we didn't get into a major effort to help Ethiopia, because of that drought, until later than we should have. But I think none of us could really believe, at the beginning, that the situation was as bad as it was, when we met with this attitude on the part of the Ethiopian government. So that was very sad.

Now, sometimes the question is raised of how much that drought had to do with the revolution that got started the following year. I think it certainly had something to do with it, because it strengthened the impression among the educated people of the country, who really were conscious of what was going on, that the government had not shown the compassion toward its own people which it should have, or made a concerted effort to do something about the situation. So it damaged the government's reputation to a certain extent. But on the other hand, I think that factor could be overdone, too. It would

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be a gross oversimplification to say that the revolution got started because of the terrible drought; it was one of the factors involved, but I don't think it was a crucial factor.

Q: Well, now during this time of this creeping coup, you were the Chargé; is this correct? The ambassador had left, so that you were in charge of the American mission there. Were you seeing Haile Selassie, and how did you find him at the time?

WYMAN: I saw him probably twice at the palace, to discuss things with him. I had not seen him—well, that close up, you might say—before, and I was really shocked by his mental feebleness, when I did see him. I had the definite impression, frankly, that he was senile. He did not react with the degree of alertness that I would have expected, really, from any head of state.

On one of those occasions, I told him that the United States was planning to leave Kagnew Station eventually and was cutting down the number of its military personnel there substantially in the near future, which was an important development from Ethiopia's standpoint. It was clear, from his reaction, that he didn't like the idea, but he virtually had nothing to say on the subject. I found that astonishing.

Certainly this was a very important factor that enabled this incipient revolution to get out of control. If he had been in full possession of his faculties, or if he, at that time, had had somebody as Prime Minister to whom he gave full support, and had acted very vigorously, the outcome might have been different, I think. But that wasn't the case. So his condition had a lot to do with the development of the revolution.

Q: Well, then I suppose you might proceed with how things moved.

WYMAN: Well, once this Derg that I referred to came together in Addis, they began to exert influence more and more on the situation. As a matter of fact, all other authorities seemed to have lost their authority, to put it most simply. You had what was increasingly seen to be a power vacuum, and it looked as though the only people who could get

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some things done—you became increasingly aware—was this Derg. Their influence was growing and expanding into this power vacuum, where nobody else was really able to control matters.

That situation went on, basically—I don't think there's too much point in going into the details—went on, basically, until the Emperor was—in August of that year, roughly six months after the revolution started—was really thrown out of his palace and taken off to house arrest. The violent phase of the revolution, though, had still not been reached at that point.

Q: Well, how were we reading the Derg? Obviously, this was taking place slowly, and you were watching the Emperor fade from sight. What were our concerns?

WYMAN: Well, we of course were very anxious to preserve the special relationship that we had had with Ethiopia, really going back to the time prior to World War II, when we had refused to recognize the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. That was the first thing in our history of relations with Ethiopia that really established us in a very special position. We had had that special position ever since, with these special military assistance programs and economic assistance programs, and we wanted to keep that relationship up.

It wasn't entirely clear, I would say, what tangible advantages we were going to derive, for our own strictly national interests, from that special relationship, now that Kagnew Station was obviously diminishing in its importance.

Q: Was this because of technological progress—satellites, and that sort of thing?

WYMAN: Exactly. That's the whole story. So, as I say, it wasn't clear exactly what tangible benefits we were going to derive from it, but still it was a relationship we were proud of, and we felt very strongly it was something we wanted to keep.

Q: May I ask a question?

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WYMAN: Yes.

Q: Often it arises that American policy is driven by economic—particularly commercial—interests. Did we have any particular feeling that “Gee, there are markets here.”? I mean, was this an imperative at all?

WYMAN: In a word, no. (Laughs) I think that's easy to answer. I think of two economic interests we had there at that time, but they were not going to be imperilled, really—whatever happened, I would say. One, we bought a lot of coffee from Ethiopia, and that was going to continue no matter what happened in Ethiopia, quite obviously. And then we had an oil company—Tenneco—that was prospecting for oil; hadn't found any, as yet, and in fact, didn't find any. But that was not a significant factor, really, in our outlook on the future.

There was some feeling that Ethiopia had some military significance in terms of access to the Red Sea. It was a bit vague, I always felt, but the Soviet Union was obviously strengthening its position in the Middle East—in this very important oil area—and there was some feeling in our papers on the subject—strategic papers—that Ethiopia, being close to that whole oil area of the Middle East, had a certain importance for that reason.

Q: This is a little bit geopolitical in theory, but in practice it's a little hard to translate it into the real factor.

WYMAN: Exactly.

Q: How did we see the Derg, and the elements surrounding it, in East-West terms? Did we see this as a potential Communist organization, or something?

WYMAN: Yes, we did. Of course there was tremendous secrecy regarding this Derg, and what it was doing, and who its members were. That was understandable, because in that kind of atmosphere I'm sure the Derg members were always concerned that particularly

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military officers loyal to the Emperor, and the old regime in general, might try a counter coup of some kind against them at any time, and try to wipe them out. So there was a lot of secrecy involved here.

It was hard to find out the names of the people in the Derg, and what views they represented. We were concerned about their views, and to what extent they were pro-Communist, and that type of thing. But it was a great mystery to us. We hoped, at that time—and a lot of Ethiopians hoped, particularly the educated civilians—hoped that all of this uproar would lead to a parliamentary, a real parliamentary system. There were a number of signs along the way that were fairly encouraging in that respect. At one point there was even a committee set up to work out methods of establishing a more democratic system.

So we were concerned about that, but there was nothing you could really do about it, and it was very hard to find out, for quite some time, how great that danger was. We're still talking about the beginning period. Later on it became considerably more obvious that the communist-minded ones in the Derg had gotten control of the organization. But that came later on, about the end of 1974.

Q: But now, to get the sequence, the Derg—after about six months or so—put Haile Selassie under house arrest. Is that correct?

WYMAN: Yes.

Q: How did we feel about that at the time?

WYMAN: Because of the excellent relationship he had always had with the United States, we felt a lot of sympathy for him. We regarded him as an old friend. On the other hand, it had been apparent for some time now that events were clearly moving in that direction; it was not a real surprise.

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It happened a little bit sooner, though, than anyone would have expected. You didn't know, until that happened, whether all of a sudden some counter move might come out of the blue, on behalf of the Emperor, that would change the situation radically. There were still a lot of powerful men, who had supported the Emperor, who had not been executed; they were still there. We didn't know what was secretly going on, and this possibility of a counter movement was very much around.

But when the Emperor actually was placed under house arrest, it was clearly—well, a matter for the Ethiopians to decide; it was not an issue between them and the United States. There was no thought of our protesting, or anything like that. And we continued to endeavor to keep up the best relationship we could, with the authorities in power.

Q: Speaking of authorities, how was daily business done? Was this becoming more and more difficult, as the government became weaker?

WYMAN: Well, it was—yes. The principal difficulty was that you knew, when you went to negotiate or discuss things, that you were no longer discussing them with the people who mattered. I mean, to take the simplest example: if you went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a year earlier, to talk about any subject—and you talked with the man, say, on the American desk—you knew that what he had to say really was backed up, right up to the Emperor.

But when you went in now—under these new circumstances—to talk to that same person, he was as polite and friendly as ever. But you found, probably, that he was much less willing and able to say anything significant. He probably would tell you—whatever your representations concerned—that he would report what you had to say, and eventually get a response to you.

And you also had the distinct feeling that even if he personally felt that your representations were entirely agreeable, and consonant with Ethiopia's interests, the

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answer he later came back with wouldn't necessarily be of the same tenor. (Laughs) You were just talking to a courier. That was basically it; you knew you were just talking to a courier.

Q: Then in some mysterious way, if you asked, say, for Ethiopian support on a United Nations vote or something, it would disappear into the Derg somehow, and come back? And so you just didn't know where the decisions were being made?

WYMAN: Well, you knew by then that the decision was going to come from the Derg, and it would get back to you eventually. And you suspected by then that the answer would not be of the type that you wanted. But let me speak to this question of U.N. affairs, anyway. That was a very special area that didn't change much when the new regime came in.

Because, basically, in Ethiopia, and let's say, not unlike the situation in many African countries, our representations—and remember that Ethiopia was very pro-American until this all started—were really quite pointless. What mattered to them was, you might say, peer approval, by the other African states. They were not going to get out of line with the general position of African countries except under extraordinary circumstances. If you'd found some particular U.N. issue where their interests very clearly and strongly went one way, and the African countries were going the other way—all right. But it would be unusual to find that kind of case.

In general, the argumentation that we would put forward would be far less significant to them than simply the fact that all, or almost all the African countries were going to take a certain position. So we really couldn't hope to affect their votes in the U.N. before the revolution, during the revolution, or after the revolution.

Q: It seems to me that you must have had the entire diplomatic corps, particularly those that were active in the world, rather than just the pro forma representation—everybody must have been running around trying to make contact in this Derg, and to find out who's who, and whom to talk to, and how to cultivate it. Because that's how diplomacy works. Did

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you and your colleagues get together and try to read the Derg tea leaves, to find out where things were? And were you able to make any contacts, or ties to this amorphous body?

WYMAN: Okay, the difference there is whether you're talking about getting information about what the Derg was up to, or whether you're talking about contacts with the Derg. I don't believe the members of the Derg had any direct contacts with any of the Western countries, during this time. They clearly did not want it. They couldn't have done it without coming under intense suspicion from other members of the Derg, and that might mean their sudden death. So they were not doing that.

Whether they had such contacts with the Soviets, and some of the other Eastern countries that were there, I don't know; perhaps they did. I just don't know. They may not have, because they were still very secretive.

But you're right, of course, in terms of comparing the tea leaves, and trying to figure out what the Derg was up to. There was tremendous diplomatic activity in exchanging rumors and reports on that.

There was a lot of that at diplomatic receptions, of which there were a lot in Addis Ababa. But you always had to take that information with lots of grains of salt. The trouble was that one of the ambassadors could come in with something he had heard, and maybe he wasn't at all sure of it but he kind of wanted to test it out—this particular report—and he'd mention it to a couple of his colleagues, when he first came into the reception. Well, by the time everybody went home, probably every ambassador and charg# there had heard that story, you know, and gotten it from all sides. (Laughs) By that time it had—to pick up this term we use now—it had become the conventional wisdom. (Laughs) Just because one guy brought it in one time, to test it out.

Q: And you had nothing else to work with.

WYMAN: Not much.

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Q: After the Emperor had been put into house arrest, you had this sort of shadow, but powerful government. You had a shell of a government which you used as a courier to do things. But how did it play out after that? We're talking about the end of 1974.

WYMAN: Well, we haven't quite gotten there yet. It's only still about August, 1984, when they put the Emperor under house arrest. And the other thing that happened at that time was that a military general took over as head of state.

Q: Who was this?

WYMAN: This was General Aman Andom. He was one of the very few generals in the Ethiopian Army who had a reputation for liberalism, and for having, to some extent, stood up against the Emperor on a previous occasion. So he was really quite widely respected in the Ethiopian military establishment, but definitely not one of the Emperor's men. So he seemed to be a fairly logical choice for this position, at that time. But they were very anxious—that is the people behind Andom, the Derg particularly—about what the reaction in Ethiopia would be when Andom became the head of state.

What happened there was that I got a telephone call—I think it was the day after, or maybe two days after the house arrest of the Emperor, asking me to come and see the new head of state, General Andom. They wanted me to come on very short notice—about two hours after that. I felt this was clearly the right thing to do, and as I said before, there was certainly not going to be any question of a U.S. protest about the Emperor having been deposed. That was up to Ethiopia. So I felt there was no question that it was entirely proper for me to go, and deal with him as a head of state.

What I hadn't realized—not that it would have made any difference—was that the reason the Derg had wanted this to take place was that they were going to make a photo opportunity out of the whole situation.

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When I got there—in the outer office of General Andom, and was waiting—I was aware that in the office I was obviously going to be ushered into, there seemed to be a fair amount of noise back there, and confusion, and sounds of things being shifted around. That puzzled me.

After a short wait they opened the door and ushered me in. Well, I came right in to a battery of lights, so they could tape the scene for television. And there it was, that night, that the American Charg# d'affaires had called on the new head of state.

The Derg was still very much worried at that time about the domestic reaction to the deposition of the Emperor. And it wasn't just the American Charg#, they also called in some of the Western European ambassadors. All this was on television that night, you see. They were showing their people—here are all these governments around the world that have accepted the head of state. So that was a very interesting case.

Neither one of us said anything important, you know. It was strictly a photo opportunity. He more or less said, “I just wanted to meet you.” And I said, “I wish you well.” (Laughs) That was about it. But anyway, I was glad that I didn't say anything about recognition. The Ethiopians were annoyed with one or two of the ambassadors who slipped in some reservations that their visit should not be construed as a final decision on the question of recognition. The Derg did not like that at all.

Q: You hadn't had any instructions, or really any time for instructions.

WYMAN: Right.

Q: So you just went.

WYMAN: Yes. I was sure it was the right thing to do, and it didn't bother me. So I just went ahead.

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Well, to go on with the chronology, the trouble is I don't want to get into too much detail here. General Andom disagreed with the Derg, it soon became apparent, primarily over Eritrea. He was an Eritrean himself and he was in favor of reaching a compromise agreement of some kind with the Eritreans. The Derg had decided on the use of military force to put down the Eritrean revolt, and they wanted to go that way. So because of these differences with General Andom, they really executed him, in his own house, in a fire-fight.

Then they chose a new military head of state, somebody who was fairly well-known, Tafagre Bonti. He was still a general, in other words, not one of the members of the Derg.

Then the next development of real importance was in, I think, November.

Q: Of '74?

WYMAN: Seventy-four, still, yes. They had arrested, by this time, a lot of the leading men in the country. And in November, one night, they executed 60 of them all at once. There had been a discussion before then of bringing them to trial; there had been a lot of that in the papers. They were going to bring these men to trial for their crimes: embezzlement, and corruption, and this kind of thing. And then they executed them overnight.

So that's what I referred to as the beginning of the violent stage of the revolution. Of course that shocked everybody in the country and out of the country. Very shortly thereafter, on the basis of instructions from Washington, we informed them that our military aid was being suspended. We very carefully did not say "terminated," we said "suspended." And it was made clear by implication, I would say, that a continuation of this type of brutality might prevent a resumption of military aid.

Q: Often when relations are poor with a country, the ambassador is withdrawn, and a charg# is left. Was the point made that no new ambassador was going to be named?

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WYMAN: It was never mentioned; we never told them anything on that subject. Curiously enough, Washington never told me anything on that subject, either. (Laughs) I told them, from time to time, that in spite of our professions to the authorities of our desire to go on helping the government with economic assistance and military assistance, and of our good will and so forth—I said obviously they tend to take these statements with a grain of salt, when we don't appoint a new ambassador, and they should be aware of that. Those telegrams went in, and I never got a response from Washington.

Q: Well, after the bloodbath—when they killed the leaders—you must have known, being a political observer—that within Washington, nobody was going to send an American ambassador out under those circumstances, for some time.

WYMAN: Yes, right.

Q: You knew you were there for the long term.

WYMAN: Yes, although the greater length of time without an ambassador was prior to that. It was still a few months away but most of the time I was there as Charg# had been prior to that bloodbath.

I think at this point I ought to come back to discuss an area that we haven't gone into, one which I think is clearly the most important aspect in terms of our relationship with Ethiopia. That's the question of our military assistance program.

Now, in what I've said before, I think you can see the beginnings of this story, when I talked about the Soviets backing Somalia with far more military equipment than we were providing to Ethiopia. The key thing, I think, to have in mind here—in terms of U.S.-Ethiopian relations—was that prior to the revolution—and in the early stages of the revolution, and also right up to the time I left Ethiopia—the one subject the Ethiopians wanted to discuss with us any day and every day was increased military assistance.

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As I say, they had very little to say about the drought. They never really came to us and wanted additional economic assistance, as such. But they hammered away at us constantly on, "Why can't we have more military assistance?" And quite understandably, because they not only had a very serious insurgency going on in Eritrea, but they also had a threat from Somalia—that had openly said it wanted this chunk of territory of theirs—growing all the time. So they were very concerned about it. They wanted to get far more, in terms of military assistance, from us than we were giving them.

Now, what we were providing them in military assistance, when I arrived, was approximately \$9,000,000 annually. In response to all of this urging from them, constantly, we finally got up, I believe, to a level of about \$12,000,000.

Q: Still pretty small potatoes.

WYMAN: Of course. Now, what needs to be taken into account, at that point, is that this was still in the period when South Vietnam was in existence, and the American Congress was dominated by the Vietnam syndrome; and when military assistance—in political terms—was an obscene word, practically.

To go to congressional committees, and try and get an increase in military assistance—at the time when military assistance was being cut back because of the Vietnam syndrome—was an impossible job, frankly. You could try. I guess I shouldn't say impossible, because we did manage to get these very slight increases, but beyond slight increases was obviously impossible. There was no way. Congress just could not focus on the particular Ethiopian-Somalian situation to that extent. They were dominated by this general idea that military assistance—we've got to cut back, it's a bad thing. So we were really boxed in on that score, and yet this was the one thing that all these Ethiopian governments cared about a great deal. And there was an interesting aspect of that, too. We had to provide an explanation to the Ethiopian government of why we didn't provide more military assistance, in view of this Somali threat. There were basically, I think, only two arguments that could

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be used. One was that we really think you're exaggerating the Somali threat; it's not really as bad as it looks. And you would support that thesis one way or another. Or, the other argument you could use was to talk about the effect of Vietnam on the U.S. Congress, and on its attitudes towards military assistance. And explain, in practical terms, the limitations this placed on us when we tried to increase military assistance for Ethiopia.

The telegrams we would get from the Department stressed the first argument about the threat from Somalia being overdone, much more than the other one. I tried hard—well, put it this way—I stretched the instructions I had just as far as I possibly could to emphasize the congressional difficulty, rather than the overblown threat from Somalia. Really, for two reasons.

One, I felt that their concerns for Somalia were perfectly well-founded, and in fact, they proved to be. Secondly, I realized—well, I could naturally be more conscious of this than they would tend to be in Washington—that if you went to the Ethiopian authorities at that time, and said, “Look, you don't really need to worry about Somalia,” they would write us off—particularly those of us who were talking to them there in the Embassy.

They would think, “Well, obviously what Washington is getting from its people in Mogadishu, and from Addis, is just total nonsense. We're dealing here with some idiots. Talking to these guys is hopeless, because they're idiots; they can't see the situation.”

And I thought, “Really, we don't want to get that reaction from them, because it will impact on everything, if they regard us as idiots not worth talking to.” If you put the stress on the other factor—how military assistance looks to Congress because of Vietnam—I don't think it will be as damaging in terms of their whole attitude towards our government, and its representatives to them, as the other viewpoint would be. So that's why I did it that way.

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Q: While we're talking about this, what sort of reports were you getting from the other side of the moon? And that is, from our embassy in Mogadishu, in Somalia, at the time, about the Somali threat, and the buildup there?

WYMAN: Well, we were getting reports that gave us a fairly good idea of the large dimensions of the assistance that was coming from the Soviets; that was pretty apparent. I don't think that they had all the details, because of course the Soviets were concealing that to some extent. But it was certainly clear from their reporting that the amount of military assistance, and the actual physical equipment that the Soviets were pouring into Somalia, far exceeded what we were doing for Ethiopia. That was the key factor.

And that was why I personally felt there was plenty of reason for the Ethiopians to be concerned about this situation. I have a feeling that in some of the telegrams I sent we indicated that the threat looked pretty bad to us—from Somalia—seen from Addis. And I believe that the Department didn't really answer us directly, but whenever they would send us some instructions to be conveyed to the Ethiopians, as to why we had to turn down their latest request to increase the military assistance by a vast amount—there would always be this point in there that really the Somali threat isn't as big as it appears.

Now let me weave this into the chronology—this military assistance point, again. As I say, this emphasis from their governments on this point, and on increasing it; and a desire to have meetings with us, attended by their top-ranking generals—which we did participate in—all of this was very pronounced, all through this period that I was there.

I remember it most vividly at one particular meeting, shortly after the Emperor had been deposed, and General Aman Andom had come in as the head of state—and I met with him. The one subject that he wanted to talk about was military assistance. He hadn't discussed it with me before, himself. He gave me the standard approach, as to how great the Somali threat was, and how they had openly said long ago they were going to have the

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Ogaden—they must have it back. How, as the long friend of the United States, Ethiopia needed help from us, and so forth.

I gave him, in a little more extended version than usual even, all the response—although it was difficult to talk too long on the subject, particularly when I didn't want to put much emphasis on this point of the Somali threat not being very great—but I made it as clear to him as I could why we could not do more. And he kept coming back with questions, and so forth. We had quite an extended meeting on the subject, and I really felt that I'd said everything that could be said, and said it as clearly as it could be said. And as we were saying goodbye, he said to me—his exact words were—“Mr. Wyman, just tell Washington that I still don't understand.”

Q: I think it's the hardest thing in the world to explain the American political system, which is driven by internal politics. Well, do you feel that as things played out there, that our military aid—with a modest increase, or more than a little, it still would have been on the modest side, compared to what we were pouring into Israel, and other places—would have been a real factor in maybe changing things?

WYMAN: Well, my reaction to that question—when you put it that way—is that the question is totally academic, for the reasons I gave. There was no possibility whatsoever of Congress doing that. So to speculate as to what level of assistance could have had an impact on the situation, is just quite fruitless, I think.

Q: Well, it could be academic, but we're also looking at this as what are tools of diplomacy. And so there might be a lesson learned.

WYMAN: I agree with you there. Okay, let me take that point up. There is a very important lesson here, because the principal point I want to make about all this is that this question of military assistance was the crucial one that led Ethiopia to depart from and abandon its long-standing virtual alliance with the United States, and turn to the Soviet Union. So

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while on the one hand, the possibility was not there for us to do more, in terms of military assistance, it did prove to be the decisive factor in the situation, not surprisingly.

Because what would eventually happen here was that as the Derg increasingly realized, over time, that they couldn't get a really substantial increase in military assistance from the United States; and as they increasingly discovered that their military efforts in Eritrea were not sufficient to defeat the resistance, and retake Eritrea for them; and as they saw the Somali threat still getting bigger all the time, with the Soviets pouring in more and more aid, they became, I think, fairly desperate about this situation. They came, inevitably, to the one conclusion: we've got to have much stronger military forces than we have now, we can't get them from the United States, we're not able to purchase them, we don't have the money to purchase them from outsiders—the British, the French, or something like that. What's left in the whole world? The only thing left is the Soviet Union.

Now, of course the big difficulty there was the fact that the Soviets were aiding the other side. (Laughs) And these developments, then—going over to the Soviet side—that took place after I left, and I don't know the details of it at all. But what is obvious is that finally they wanted so much to get that military assistance, and made that so evident to the Soviets, that eventually the Soviets took a very questionable decision, I think, from the standpoint of their own interests. They decided, well, all right, we'll go along with that, and we will give them a lot of military assistance, because we've got a group in control of that country that would really respond to that, and we can establish a very solid relationship with them.

Now I have the impression that at the beginning, the Soviets really thought they might be able to have this solid relationship with both countries: Ethiopia and Somalia. And of course that quickly proved impossible. But this is going beyond the period that I was there, so I'm not going to talk about that.

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You can say, in a sense, that as we'd lost China after World War II, we lost Ethiopia to the Soviets. And clearly what did it was the fact that they could get so much more from the Soviets, in terms of military assistance, than they could from us.

The Soviets came in, eventually, with military assistance that made what we had previously provided—at least on an annual basis—absolute peanuts.

So in that sense, here's where the inevitable logic of the situation comes in—that they wound up in the Soviet camp. It's kind of an unusual situation; that's what I think is fascinating. I don't think you find too many situations in recent history that have been of that type, where the military assistance itself was considered so enormous in importance, compared to all other factors, and where in the East-West competition, the Soviets had this tremendous advantage.

Q: Well, but also the timing was such that you had the—I don't know if you want to call it the Brezhnev doctrine, or the Brezhnev policy—in full flower, at the same time; with the end of Vietnam syndrome becoming so strong in the United States. Where we were withdrawing at the same time the Soviets thought that they really could do things in Africa. Because looking at it later—I mean, the Soviets don't want to play this game anymore, and we don't—we're taking a little more rational approach to it.

WYMAN: Right.

Q: Well, how did things play out while you were there? You were there until when?

WYMAN: I left in the summer of '75. And so far we had talked about reaching this period of the executions in November. Well, the radicalism of the regime became even more apparent in those remaining months, because they introduced the nationalization of agricultural land. And just as I was leaving, they were starting to introduce the nationalization of business firms, too. They were still—-at the time I left, the summer of '75—still relying on us; we still had all our military advisors there, and they were still

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getting the military assistance from us. A lot of the propaganda that was coming out of the government was unfriendly towards the United States, and Western countries generally, and certainly pro-Soviet, and pro-Communist.

But they had this key relationship still going on with us, because again, while it was a strange looking situation, I think you can see the logic of the situation. It had to remain that way because military strength came first, and they weren't going to abandon us until they could get the support from the Soviets, no matter how much they might dislike us, or be disgusted with us for not giving them more.

Q: So we had strain, but still proper relations with them. Were Americans particularly in danger, or anything like that, at that particular time?

WYMAN: Well, that's a good question. We never really knew. With all that was going on—all these signs of mutiny, and authority disappearing and crumbling, and the revolutionary group gradually taking power—it was obviously a very volatile situation and inherently risky. The dangers didn't actually—for Americans, at that time—materialize. We were worried about it, quite worried about it.

I remember on one occasion addressing all of the wives in town, at a special meeting, to give them my analysis of the whole situation in the country. The gist of what I had to say was that the potential for real problems for Americans appeared to be there, but that we hadn't really quite gotten into that area yet, and that I would certainly sound the alarm at the first time that we really did get into that area. We were kind of circling it, and I couldn't see that we were getting into it.

There was one incident that did take place, but it was not so much connected with the revolution. In Eritrea there were some Americans who were captured by the insurgents.

Q: Were these from Tenneco?

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WYMAN: Yes.

Q: I have to put in an aside there. I was Consul General in Athens, and I saved you a certain headache by persuading the Chairman of the Board of Tenneco to stay in Athens; and I helped him draft telegrams to you. He wanted to fly in and we advised him this wouldn't help at all.

WYMAN: Right, yes. That was not a problem that we had with the Derg at all, and eventually it was solved. We had to spend a great deal of time on it, and it was a dangerous situation. It did work out; they all got back safely, thank goodness.

Q: Let's speak about Ethiopians, and helping them to get out, or had it not reached that proportion yet?

WYMAN: There were a couple of effects there that were immediately visible. A lot of the people that we had been friendly with, really did not want to have contact with us anymore, after a certain point. Because they felt it was too dangerous. So of course we took account of that, and were able to understand it, and didn't do anything we felt might compromise them.

There were certainly some that tried to leave the country. There were some that made it; there were some that got caught. And the ones that got caught were usually put in prison, at that time. I don't think they were . . .

Q: Did we try to help give a little extra assistance to those who wanted to get out?

WYMAN: There wasn't really much that we could do about that, because the ones that needed help were ones that knew they'd get out only if they completely escaped the notice of the authorities. Those people were not going to telegraph their intentions by trying to get a U.S. visa or anything like that. They weren't coming to us at all; they were just trying to get out surreptitiously. Because it was quite early in the game that the authorities

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announced that they were going to take a very sharp look at anybody who wanted to leave the country. It was generally very difficult for any of the influential people to leave the country after that. So there wasn't much we could do about that situation.

Q: You left then in the summer of '75?

WYMAN: Yes, that's right.

Q: Had the new ambassador arrived?

WYMAN: Yes, Art Hummel had come in—I believe it was February of '75.

Q: Did he come with any particular instructions to take a new look, or did he have anything in his pocket, such as attempts to influence using aid, or anything else?

WYMAN: I don't believe so; I don't recall anything of that nature. I don't think there were any new instructions that he had.

I think we've covered the points of greatest interest here. The finale, in a sense, was still to come, after I left, when they did turn to the Soviets. Seen from the Washington standpoint it didn't have much of an impact here, but in terms of the local picture it was such a very dramatic turnaround when the Soviets went on their side. Somalia, then deciding that it was now or never in terms of an attack, went ahead and attacked. And the Cuban troops came in, and so forth. But that all came later on.

As I say, there was a certain inevitability that the Ethiopian government at that time would go in that direction, provided the Soviets were willing to leave behind all their investment in Somalia to do that. The answer may be that at the beginning the Soviets thought they could be friendly with both sides. There was a report that Castro was supposed to come over and try and mediate, and convince the two countries that the Soviets were going to

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be a strong supporter of both of them. But then that option was really blown up when the Somali government went ahead and went in there.

Q: I want to thank you very much. I think this was a crucial time in our relations with the country, and I think you have pointed out some of the factors. Thank you.

End of interview